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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 07 BANGKOK 001537

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DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/EAP

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TAGS: ASEC PTER

SUBJECT: THAILAND SECURITY ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE  
QUESTIONNAIRE - SPRING 2007

REF: SECSTATE 23252

Classified By: Larry D. Salmon, Regional Security Officer, Reason: 1.4 (c)(d).

11. (U) The information provided applies to Embassy Bangkok. New RSO at ConGen Chiang Mai will report septel for ConGen Chiang Mai and Udorn areas. Appropriate members of post's core Emergency Action Committee have cleared this cable.

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Political Violence  
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12. (SBU) Demonstrations

1A. (SBU) Are there any ethnic or religious communities in country which appear prone to carrying out significant anti-American demonstrations?

(U) Embassy Response: Yes. There are many Muslim communities throughout Thailand, including in Bangkok (and Chiang Mai), and the five southernmost provinces in Thailand are predominantly Muslim. Given the insurgency and the current international climate, we assess the Muslim community as more likely to carry out significant anti-American demonstrations than the Buddhist majority or other ethnic communities.

1B. (SBU) Have there been anti-American demonstrations in the country within the last 12 months?

(U) Embassy Response: Yes. There have been peaceful anti-American demonstrations at Embassy Bangkok during the last 12 months, but the majority of Anti-American demonstrations here have been issue-oriented. For example, approximately 200 Thai Muslims protested against American support to Israel during the Israel-Hezbollah/Lebanon dispute last summer (06 Bangkok 04968), but four other demonstrations here were for Thai democracy/governance-related or for factory worker exploitation issues (06 Bangkok 217, 4214, 6172, 07 Bangkok 428).

1C. (U) Have demonstrations taken place near or in front of U.S. diplomatic facilities?

(U) Embassy Response: Yes

1D. (U) What is the average size of an anti-American demonstration?

(U) Embassy Response: The demonstrations at the Bangkok

Embassy over the last three years have ranged in size from as few as 10 participants up to a thousand. The average demonstration size over the last year is approximately 350-400 persons.

**E. (U)** Are anti-American demonstrations usually triggered by U.S. foreign policy initiatives, military actions, or by domestic issues?

(U) Embassy Response: Foreign policy initiatives, military actions, and domestic issues are all subjects of Thai demonstrations whose focus is frequently specific USG policies or actions. The demonstrations, however, have not evidenced a broader hostility to the American people or culture or military.

**F. (U)** Are demonstrations generally violent or peaceful?

(U) Embassy Response: All have been peaceful.

**G. If violent, have any demonstrations resulted in damage to USG property or injuries to USG employees?**

(U) Embassy Response: N/A

**H. (SBU) If violent, have any demonstrators ever penetrated our perimeter security line?**

(U) Embassy Response: No. Thai police support has been very good.

**I. (U) Have there been anti-government demonstrations in the country within the last 12 months?**

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(U) Embassy Response: Yes, but the protests usually focused on individual politicians or specific government policies or actions, not on the Thai government as a whole, until the September 2006 coup which ousted the democratically elected Prime Minister. This coup resulted in the declaration of martial law, which included a limitation on political protests. While martial law (excluding some limits on political parties) was recently lifted in a majority of Thailand provinces, during the period there were several small protests (under 100 participants) against the ruling military Council for National Security (CNS), and its appointed civilian caretaker government. Recent anti-government protests revolved around local politics like investigations into reported corrupt activities of the former governing officials, and formulation of a new body to draft a new constitution.

**J. (U) Have these demonstrations taken place near or in front of U.S. diplomatic facilities?**

(U) Embassy Response: Yes. One demonstration, pre-coup, was to show support for Thailand democracy, not the Thai Prime Minister (PM), after the PM sent a letter to the USG asking for support. In another demonstration, Jan 2007, demonstrators asked for USG support against Singapore after a Thai-Singapore dispute arose separately.

**K. (U) What is the average size of an anti-government demonstration?**

(U) Embassy Response: For the anti-government policy protests near USG facilities, the average protest size is several hundred. The demonstrations over the first nine months of last year focused on the removal of Prime Minister Thaksin, and the protest size ranged from 35 to over 1,000. Demonstrations focused solely on removing PM Thaksin, pre-coup, ranged from 5,000 to over 100,000 protestors, but occurred several miles away from most US diplomatic facilities in Bangkok.

**IL. (U) Are demonstrations generally violent or peaceful?**

(SBU) Embassy Response: Generally peaceful, however, there have been violent protests, or incidents of mob violence, in far southern Thailand, where the anti-government insurgency continues to flourish. On May 19, 2006 a group of approximately 100 villagers in Narathiwat briefly took two female teachers hostage in protest of the arrest of two local suspects. The teachers were beaten, with one dying after being in a coma for several months.

**IM. (U) If violent, have any demonstrations resulted in damage to USG property?**

(U) Embassy Response: No

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**I3. (SBU) Macro Conflict Conditions**

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**IA. (U) Is the host country engaged in an interstate or intrastate conflict? (This may include battles between organized and violent drug cartels.)**

(SBU) Embassy Response: Yes, in two separate geographic areas of Thailand. In northwestern Thailand for the last few years, the Royal Thai Army (RTA) and RTG police forces continue to have periodic skirmishes along the Thai-Burma border with forces of the United Wa State Army (UWSA) that are based in the northern Shan State of Burma. The UWSA maintains a well-armed standing force estimated at 15,000 to 20,000 troops. The RTA and Thai border police conduct extensive military operations to interdict drug shipments by the USWA and other trafficking groups on the long, and largely undemarcated Thai-Burma border area. These operations result in occasional armed clashes; however, there has been a decrease in such incidents since 2003 (to under 5 incidents/year), in large part due to the RTG policy to build a working relationship with Burma vice a confrontational relationship.

(SBU) In the southernmost three provinces of Thailand, adjacent to the Malaysian border, RTG security forces are

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engaged against a continuing militant separatist movement. This Muslim-majority region has a 100-year history of dissent and difficulty (including some violent periods) with the central Bangkok government. Since Jan 2004 there has been a heightened level of violence with an estimated 1,800 persons killed. This region experiences attacks on a near daily basis against civilians, police, military, security personnel and other RTG-related personnel and facilities. Some violence has affected the valuable commercial center of Hat Yai/Songkhla including several simultaneous bombings of hotels and shopping centers, and car dealerships and banks since April 2005. There is still no evidence of separatist desire to expand the insurgency and anti-RTG attacks outside the immediate region.

(SBU) On December 31st, eight bombs exploded in Bangkok, killing several persons and injuring dozens. The Thai police are continuing to investigate, but have blamed the explosions on both Thai domestic supporters of the former PM deposed by the CNS (coup leaders) and/or on southern insurgents. While the explosive debris evidence recovered shows a strong similarity to explosives commonly used in the southern insurgency, no definitive blame has been placed by the RTG.

**IB. (U) If an intrastate conflict, is it an insurgency limited to a specific region or is it a countrywide civil war?**

(U) Embassy response: Both areas of conflict remain fairly limited to the northern and western Thai-Burmese border, and the southern Thai-Malay border areas.

**IC.** If limited to a specific region, are any US diplomatic facilities located in this region?

(U) Embassy response: The Consulate General Chiang Mai is located in northern western Thailand, but is 60 miles from the closest border area where conflicts occur. No US diplomatic facilities remain in southern Thailand since the mid 2005 closing of the DEA Songkhla resident office.

**ID. (U)** Have any of the factions involved in intrastate conflicts signaled or demonstrated an anti-American orientation?

(S) Embassy response: In early 2005, Post received a sole source report stating a conversation took place discussing the possible kidnapping of DEA members in retaliation for announcement of US criminal indictments against Burmese drug traffickers. No further evidence surfaced surrounding this information. No other anti-American orientations have been recorded.

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**I4. (SBU) Host Country Capabilities**  
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**IA. (U)** Are law enforcement agencies professional and well-trained?

(SBU) Embassy response: Generally yes, however, the level of professionalism and training continues to vary greatly throughout Thailand, with Bangkok police having the most professional and well-trained police, and the more remote provinces less so.

**IB. (U)** Have they been trained by US Agencies? If so, please elaborate on effectiveness of training.

(U) Embassy response: The Thai border authorities and police have received considerable training in the last five years from the USG including DOS (ATA and ILEA), DOJ, DHS, DOD, and other USG-sponsored programs. The Royal Thai Police (RTP) and other Thai security agencies have put much of this training into practice and have incorporated it into training programs for regional and local officials. DOD also provides security training assistance to Thai military and security units, and RSO/Force Protection unit provides security-related seminars to RTP and Thai military units in the areas where US military personnel conduct joint military exercises and where DOD personnel take liberty frequently.

**IC. (U)** Are Law Enforcement agencies confronted with serious, widespread corruption inside their agencies?

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(U) Embassy response: Yes; however this has not affected the host country's steadfast support for USG interests in Thailand.

**ID. (U)** Are the intelligence services professional and capable of deterring terrorist actions?

(S) Embassy response: Yes. The Thai intelligence and security services are capable of detecting and interrupting terrorist activities, as evidenced by the August 2003 capture of key Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) operative Hambali, assistance with renditions, and continuing cooperation with multiple Embassy law enforcement and intelligence agencies as threats and law enforcement concerns arise.

**IE. (U)** Have the intelligence services been cooperative with US Embassy requests for information and support?

(U) Embassy response: Yes.

**IF. (U)** Assuming there have been significant terrorist threats

in recent years, have host country security services been able to score any major anti-terrorism successes?

(S) Embassy response: Yes, in 2003, Thai police and intelligence services successfully carried out operations to apprehend several terrorist operatives, most notably Hambali, a major Al Qaeda figure. The arrests demonstrate that the RTG is willing and capable of detecting, disrupting, and arresting terrorists.

**I**G. (U) Has host country been responsive (re: timeliness and allocation of resources) to Embassy requests for protective security?

(U) Embassy response: Yes. On numerous occasions, the Embassy has asked for additional police resources during periods of heightened threat or protests and support has always been provided in a timely and effective manner. Host country is responsive to numerous protective security support requests for high-ranking USG official visitors including vehicle escorts, police personnel, and EOD assets.

**I**H. (U) How does the Embassy assess the overall security at major airports in the country? (EXCELLENT; VERY GOOD, GOOD/AVERAGE; POOR)

(SBU) Embassy response: Average. TSA rep notes the new major international airport authority states that it meets International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards but an ICAO assessment has not been completed to date. TSA plans a separate airport assessment in 2007.

**I**I. (U) How effective are Customs and Immigration Control agencies? (EFFECTIVE; AVERAGE; INEFFECTIVE)

(SBU) Embassy response: Customs and Immigration controls are average, but improving, following a 2003 cleanup of corruption within the Thai Immigration Bureau, which has strengthened immigration controls and hindered transnational terrorists from entering Thailand. The RTG accepted and installed the USG-sponsored PISCES immigration computer system and is already uploading information including the photographs of arriving and departing passengers. This new system should improve detection of persons with known derogatory information or bad documents. There are reports that PISCES computer problems are slowing traveler processing, which may lead to pressure for Immigration authorities to bypass this security feature. Following the transition to the new Bangkok International airport last fall, not all of the PISCES equipment was reinstalled, but the Embassy is working to increase the number of immigration stations outfitted with the system. The Embassy continues to receive anecdotal evidence of corruption at (admittedly porous) land border crossings.

**I**J. (U) How effective are border patrol forces? (EFFECTIVE; AVERAGE; INEFFECTIVE)

(U) Embassy response: Average.

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**I**K. (U) INDIGENOUS TERRORISM  
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(SBU) ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORIST GROUPS

**I**A. (U) Are there indigenous, anti-American terrorist groups in country?

(U) Embassy response: No

**I**B. (U) If yes, how many? (Please name groups)

(U) Embassy response: N/A

IC. (U) Have groups carried out anti-American attacks within the last 12 months?

(U) Embassy response: N/A

ID. (U) Were any of the attacks lethal?

(U) Embassy response: N/A

IE. (U) Have groups attacked US Diplomatic targets?

(U) Embassy response: N/A

IF. (U) Have groups attacked US business, military, or US-related targets?

(U) Embassy response: N/A

IG. (U) Have the groups limited their attacks to specific regions or do they operate countrywide?

(U) Embassy response: N/A

IH. (U) If attacks are limited to regions, are there any US Diplomatic facilities located in these regions?

(U) Embassy response: N/A

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I6. (SBU) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS

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IA. (U) Are there other indigenous terrorist groups (not anti-American) in country?

(SBU) Embassy response: Thailand has no indigenous terrorist groups; however, it has a serious and growing Muslim separatist movement which is committing almost daily acts of violence since early 2004.

IB. (U) If yes, how many? (Please name groups)

(S) Embassy response: The three primary Muslim separatist groups are the New Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), the Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Pattani (GMIP), and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional/Coordinate (BRN/C). These Thai-Muslim separatist (vice terrorist) groups advocate independence for the three Muslim majority provinces in the far south of Thailand. Individuals associated with one or more of these groups have been implicated in the hundreds of violent acts over the last two years in southern Thailand. Identifiable figures and symbols of Thai authority, including the military, police, and local security and school officials are most often targeted. However, civilians--whether operating in a government capacity or as private citizens--remain most likely to be effected by violence. The latest violent cycle began on January 4, 2004, with a well-coordinated attack in Narathiwat Province. The attack included a raid on a military camp (in which weapons were stolen) and the burning of 20 schools. These attacks appear to be the work of the surprisingly revitalized separatist groups. However, no group has come forward and claimed responsibility for the majority of the violence. The attacks have expanded from handgun assaults and murders against readily identifiable Thai authority figures to include Buddhist monks, businessmen, banks, and what appear to be indiscriminate attacks against civilians.

(S) On April 28, 2004, militants conducted a series of loosely coordinated raids across the far South, but authorities were reportedly aware of the plans and met the attackers with heavily armed police and military units,

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resulting in the deaths of many separatist attackers (most

armed with only knives or clubs). This was another significant escalation in violence in Thailand's Muslim south. The RTG initially responded by declaring limited martial law (including periodic curfews) in the three southernmost provinces. The October 2004 Tak Bai protest incident (previously mentioned), resulted in further alienation of the Muslim population. From 2004 to present, attacks upon RTG-related personnel (including police, military, security, court, and school personnel) and civilians have continued at a steady pace. On April 3, 2005, there was a series of explosions in the south which included Hat Yai and Songkhla, both vital commercial and transportation links in the area. The explosions targeted the Hat Yai international airport and two businesses in Songkhla. Two USCs were wounded in the indiscriminate attacks. On July 14, 2005 a series of coordinated attacks in Yala City prompted the government to issue an Emergency Decree for the provinces of Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani which gives authorities additional powers to detain individuals suspected of involvement in the violence. Since Feb 2006, daily reports of deadly handgun and rifle assaults as well as explosive attacks with generally small (< 5 kg) bombs targeting mainly security forces have continued, including attacks set to target first responding security forces with secondary devices.

(SBU) Following an August 31 attack upon 22 banks, September attacks upon Hat Yai commercial businesses and a November attack upon eight car dealerships, the insurgents have widen the scope of their attacks upon targets in the south to include security and civilian targets. Coupled with increasing number of mutilations and beheadings of security personnel and civilians, the insurgency has increasingly targeted the general population with violence, following the targeting of security personnel and economic infrastructures.

(S) The Embassy continues to closely monitor the security situation in the south. To date (March 2007), no evidence linking outside terrorist influence (notably Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah/JI) with the southern insurgency violence has been found.

**¶C. (U)** Have groups carried out attacks in the capital or areas where US Diplomatic facilities are located?

(SBU) Embassy response: No attacks or incidents outside the southernmost Thai provinces have been directly attributed to the southern insurgents. The eight New Year's Eve (12/31/2006) Bangkok bombings (noted earlier) are suspected of being the responsibility of southern insurgents or by Thai coup opponents utilizing explosives similar in composition to those found in the south.

**¶D. (U)** Were the attacks lethal and/or indiscriminate?

(U) Embassy response: The Bangkok bombings killed three and injured several dozen people.

**¶E. (U)** Have there been any Americans killed or injured in these attacks?

(U) Embassy response: Two Americans were injured in the Hat Yai airport bombing in Songkhla province in April 2005. There has been no indication of the specific targeting of Americans.

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**¶7. (SBU) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM**

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**(SBU) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST INDICATORS**

**¶A. (SBU)** Are there any foreign terrorist groups that have a presence in country? (Provide names)

(S) Embassy response: Yes. Support elements of Hezbollah and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE aka Tamil Tigers) are present in Thailand.

IB. (SBU) How does post assess this presence? Is it an operational cell? Financial cell? Support cell? Propaganda cell?

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(S) Embassy response: Both Hezbollah and LTTE retain fund-raising and support activities in the Lebanese and Sri Lankan immigrant communities. There is no information that either of these groups is targeting U.S. interests in Thailand. Members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Al-Qaeda (AQ) have been in Thailand in the past; however, since the 2003 arrest of Hambali and several other JI operatives, there is no evidence indicating that JI/AQ currently maintains a presence in Thailand. It is assumed that JI/AQ operatives not identified by U.S. intelligence or law enforcement ) or traveling with fraudulent documents - may on occasion transit Bangkok, as it is a major air transportation hub in SE Asia. While there are a small number of supporters of JI and radical political Islam in Thailand, there is no evidence that these supporters are involved in terrorist planning. RTG and Embassy security entities continue to monitor for any indication of JI/AQ activity in Thailand.

IC. (SBU) Is the host government sympathetic to these groups?

(SBU) Embassy response: No

ID. (SBU) Are there suspect Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) in the country that have a relationship with any of these groups?

(S) Embassy response: Yes. The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), Al Haramain, Umm Al-Qura, and the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) have operations in Thailand. These Islamic NGOs have been tied to Islamic extremists in other countries.

IE. (SBU) Are there any ethnic or religious communities in country that are sympathetic to these groups?

(S) Embassy response: Yes. Among the Southern Thailand Muslim population there is a Salafist/Wahhabist minority, elements of which can be considered sympathetic to JI and AQ. The Thai Muslim population is, in general, opposed to U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Thai military support to the US-led efforts.

IF. (SBU) How does post assess the level, intent, and scope of hostile intelligence services (Iran, Syria, Serbia, Sudan, etc) in country relative to potential anti-American terrorist acts?

(S) Embassy response: Just prior to the start of U.S. military action in Iraq, the RTG expelled Iraqi intelligence operatives, reducing the potential that had existed for attacks by those operatives. In the past, Iranian intelligence was involved in recruiting and supporting Hezbollah activity, but there has been no known activity since the aborted 1994 truck bomb incident in which the Israeli Embassy was allegedly targeted. Following the Israel/Hezbollah skirmishes in southern Lebanon in summer 2006, Post has remained especially attuned to possible Iranian-directed surveillance of USG facilities in Thailand, or the movement of Hezbollah-affiliates through Thailand.

IG. (SBU) How does post assess the availability of weapons and explosives in country from nearby countries for hostile terrorist elements?

(S) Embassy response: Arms trafficking does occur in Thailand as well as in surrounding countries, making them potentially available to terrorist elements, though it is unknown to what extent any terrorist group has attempted to acquire them. Explosives and light weapons (so-called 'war weapons' in

Thailand) are also easily obtained in border areas including Cambodia and Laos, as well as in nearby Burma, as well-funded drug armies struggle against the Burmese government in the &Golden Triangle<sup>8</sup> area.

BOYCE